

## **The Eagle Spreads Its Wings** by **rmlohner**

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**Summary:** After a year-long break from any Upside Down weirdness, a new student named Carrie White arrives at Hawkins High School, and Nancy soon discovers she has some very familiar powers.

# 1. Chapter 1

It had been a year since anything strange had happened in Hawkins, and to all appearances it had gone back to being the same boring small town it always had been. Nancy Wheeler kept trying to tell herself that boring was good. The biggest problem with her life was once again which boy to be with, and that was how it should be.

The most exciting thing to happen recently was the arrival of her new classmate Carrie White. It had been a few weeks, and Nancy still couldn't get a read on the girl. She hadn't said more than a few words at a time to anyone, and never seemed to look anyone in the eye. Nancy could understand being shy, but Carrie seemed to be on another level above what was normal, and she wondered if there was something seriously wrong with her.

Of course, she'd never be rude enough to actually broach this subject with her, so that left them to keep circling around each other, neither making the first move. At least today's gym class offered a possibility to know if Carrie was any good at volleyball, and they happened to end up stationed right next to each other. Just before the game started, Nancy whispered "Good luck." It seemed a safe enough way to start.

Carrie jumped a little, then visibly calmed herself down and whispered back "Thanks." Nancy was quite surprised by this; was even that bit of normal contact too much for this girl? Any further thought was put off by the ball being served. The team held their own for a bit, but Nancy couldn't help noticing that Carrie never seemed to put much effort into participating. Finally, the ball was headed right for them. Nancy could have hit it, but she decided to let Carrie go for it instead. The result was the ball flopping to the floor right between them.

The rest of the team immediately started shouting, and Nancy noticed with some guilt that Carrie was taking the brunt of their insults. Even with as little as most of Hawkins knew about the Upside Down, word still seemed to have gotten around that she wasn't someone to mess with, and now she was seeing a real downside to that.

In the showers after class, she struggled to get her mind back to her boy troubles, which were promising to come to a head sooner rather than later. But suddenly that was also interrupted by an ear-piercing shriek. Nancy spun around to see Carrie, a towel hastily wrapped around her, running frantically around the middle of the room and still screaming. She was staring at her hand, which now that Nancy took a closer look...

"Hey everyone, the new girl just got her period!" Nancy rolled her eyes as Carol inevitably made things even worse. And her reaction turned to horror as some of the other girls also started laughing, a couple even throwing their own tampons at the screaming girl and shouting "Plug it up!"

This was definitely a step too far. Nancy put on her own towel and marched out. "Everyone, just stop!" she shouted. "What the hell is wrong with you?" That was all it took for most of them who sheepishly walked away, though Carol shot her a withering glare on the way out.

Nancy knelt down to where Carrie was now quietly sobbing out something. After a few seconds Nancy recognized it: "Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name." But rather than continue the prayer, Carrie was just repeating that one line over and over like a broken tape player.

"Hey, come on. It's okay," she said.

Carrie abruptly stopped and looked her in the face for the first time ever. "But I'm dying."

Nancy quickly shut down the urge to laugh. "What? This is completely normal. Didn't your mother tell you about it?"

Carrie shot her gaze down at the floor again. "She's a good Christian woman, like I want to be. She'd never talk about anything like this."

Now Nancy was more confused than ever. Maybe this girl's living situation really was a problem that should be looked into. But for now, all she could think to say was, "Well, trust me, every girl goes through it. I mean, I'm not what you'd call an expert, it's only been

happening for a couple years, but each month does get a bit easier."

Carrie looked at her again in shock. "Each MONTH?" And at the same time she raised her voice, a light bulb shattered overhead. Carrie ran out of the room, and Nancy was helpless to stop her. She was transfixed by the broken bulb, unable to think of anything but the only other person she'd ever known who could do something like that. Was it just a coincidence that it happened right as Carrie had gotten so emotional, or...?

As soon as she got home, Nancy headed right to Mike. "We need to talk."

## 2. Chapter 2

Nancy omitted some of the squickier details from the story, focusing mainly on just letting her brother know the important parts without just grossing him out.

Mike rubbed his nose where his glasses pressed against it. "We need to be sure about this," he said. "I don't want to get Jane's hopes up over nothing." The girl they'd all been calling Eleven for so long had preferred to go by her birth name for a while now. "Did this girl have a number on her arm?"

Nancy shrugged. "She ran off right after the light bulb exploded, so I didn't get a chance to look."

"But you were in gym class, right? So you were all in short sleeves, and I'm sure you would have noticed it there."

Nancy thought a bit. "I guess so. But maybe she puts makeup on it, so no one will find her."

"Yeah, I guess that could be it. But did she get a nosebleed after it happened?"

Nancy shook her head. "No. I definitely would have noticed that."

Mike looked hard at her. "So just how sure are you that it wasn't just a coincidence?"

Nancy frowned; her brother had managed to dismantle her excitement quite effectively. "I've never heard of anything like it just happening in that school before. They have the budget to keep things like that safe. And it happened exactly when she got really upset. You had to be there; the timing was just too perfect."

Mike paused a bit to think things over. "Well, I don't think we should bring Jane into it quite yet. You think you could bring her over here, just as friends?"

Nancy nodded. "Sounds good."

Nancy kept her eye out upon getting to school the next day, and quickly spotted Carrie. She waved, but after a single glance the girl turned her gaze to the floor and turned away. Nancy frowned and ran over. "Hey, Carrie. I didn't actually get to introduce myself yesterday. My name's Nancy."

Carrie didn't look up. "Mama says I'm not supposed to talk to you anymore."

"The same mother who didn't tell you anything about periods?" Carrie winced, and Nancy regretted getting so heated. "Sorry. It's just something I can't wrap my head around. Why doesn't she want you talking to me?"

That did get another look right in the eyes. "She says you put ideas in my head, and the Devil is going to get in if you do it any more."

Nancy couldn't quite cut off a laugh at that. "She can't be serious."

"She's always serious."

Every new thing about Carrie's mother kept throwing Nancy for a loop. But she still saw an opening: "You're still talking to me, though."

Carrie shrugged. "Just trying to be polite."

"Yeah, well, I hate to think what she said about that light bulb." And just as she hoped, Carrie got an expression Nancy was quite familiar with from her own dealings with her parents: "You didn't tell her, did you?"

Carrie made no response. She kept going, figuring she had to broach the subject sooner or later: "Did you make that happen?" Suddenly the girl's face was warped into pure horror. It lasted just a moment, but now Nancy was sure she was right about this. "Have you ever done it before?"

Carrie stopped walking. "No. Never before."

Nancy picked up on the emphasis. "But after?"

The girl took a brief look around, then whispered, "That boy Tommy

was saying some bad things to me while I was going home. Then I felt kind of funny in my head, and he just fell over."

Nancy smirked. "He must be getting used to it by now. Listen, I like talking with you. Would you like to come over to my place after school?"

Carrie frowned. "Mama wouldn't let me."

"Yeah, I could see that one coming." She sighed, and decided to just go for it. "But maybe what she doesn't know won't hurt her?"

Carrie gasped. "I couldn't."

Nancy put a hand on her shoulder. "I don't know anything about what your life's been like, but from what I've heard so far, I think this could be good for you. Do you want to just listen to her your whole life?"

Carrie glanced around again. "Okay, I guess so. She goes to sleep pretty early. Maybe I could come around 9?"

Nancy smiled. "Great. Let me tell you how to get to my house."

Karen Wheeler had been a bit put off by Nancy having a friend over so late (Ted, as Nancy had come to expect, didn't seem to care at all), but finally she was convinced and Nancy led Carrie upstairs.

"This is my brother Mike," she said as they entered Mike's room. "I've been telling him about you."

Carrie suddenly looked uncomfortable. "Mama wouldn't like me being in a strange house with a strange boy."

Nancy put on what she hoped was a disarming smile. "But she doesn't know, does she? Besides, I can be your chaperone, if you really want."

Mike stood up and extended his hand. "I'm already spoken for, anyway." Nancy cringed as she waited to see how Carrie would take that, but luckily she shook the hand after some hesitation. "I've heard some neat things about you."

Carrie gave Nancy a questioning look, and she threw her hands up. "Hey, it's not every day you meet someone who can do what you do," she said, keeping to herself that it was a little less rare in Hawkins.

Mike, ably playing the excited newcomer, went on with, "So how big a thing can you move?"

"I don't know. I haven't really tried."

Mike took a quick look around, then pulled an old board game out of the closet. "Try to lift that."

Carrie took on a look of intense concentration, and Nancy and Mike both watched avidly. She strained more and more, but the box remained still. "I'm sorry," she said to them.

Nancy said, "Don't worry about it. If this thing is real, I'm sure you can learn how to control it. Let's meet tomorrow at school and-"

She was cut off by a furious knocking at the door, loud enough to hear upstairs. Then came the sound of one of the Wheelers opening it, and then a bellowed "WHERE IS MY DAUGHTER?"



### 3. Chapter 3

Nancy, Mike, and Carrie looked at each other for just a couple seconds, then came to a silent accord that it was best to just go out and get things over with. As they reached the top of the stairs, Carrie's mother was coming through the door, without an invitation judging by how Nancy's parents were reacting. She quickly looked up at them, and Nancy gasped at the sheer fury in that face.

"Carrie, you come down here this instant! You're never coming here again!"

Carrie silent looked at Nancy and Mike with tears starting to emerge, then turned and descended the staircase. Her mother wasn't even looking at her, still keeping her eyes unnervingly locked on Nancy. "You are never to go near my daughter again, you filthy trollop!"

For once, Ted actually seemed moved to an emotion, but Karen got their first. "All right, just who do you think you are?" Her husband was reduced to putting a hand on her shoulder in support.

That haughty gaze turned to them. "I am Margaret White, the mother of the girl your daughter has been trying to corrupt. Just look at her, with her dirty pillows practically swinging free!" Nancy flushed hot at that, and couldn't help a glance down at her shirt which wasn't nearly as flimsy as the woman was making out.

Carrie finally spoke up. "Mama, please, let's just go!"

Margaret's full wrath turned upon her daughter and she gave a hard slap to Carrie's face. "Don't you ever take that tone with me, young lady!"

The sudden violence seemed to break the spell that Margaret's sheer personality had put everyone under. Nancy and Mike raced down the stairs, and Karen and Ted took a step closer. With a nearly matching fury in her eyes, Karen said, "All right, that's it. In the last few minutes I've seen plenty to make me seriously question you as a parent, and now I'm sure. You've been abusing her, haven't you?"

Margaret gave a brief, shocked laugh. "What are you talking about? Anything I need to do to make sure my child is raised in the light of the Lord can only be the right thing to do."

Nancy took up the argument. "You're messed up, lady. I mean, seriously screwed in the head." She turned to Carrie. "It's not right, the way she treats you. You don't have to put up with it."

Margaret actually started advancing towards her, and Nancy feared she was about to get hit herself. But before anything could happen, Carrie shouted, "Mama, no!" Directly afterwards, Margaret herself jerked her head back as if she'd been slapped.

She turned to Carrie with a look of horror fighting her anger. "Did you do that? Even with everything you've done lately, I didn't dare to think...but it has to be. You're a witch!"

Of all people, it was Ted who spoke next. "I don't understand anything of what's going on here, but I do know you should leave. And your daughter shouldn't go with you." Nancy looked at her father in a whole new way, the steel in his eyes showing he was absolutely serious about this.

Margaret made a visible effort to shove down her temper before speaking again. "All right, I'll go. But this is far from over. The Bible is clear, thou shalt not suffer a witch to live. Even my own flesh and blood. I know what has to be done, and I'll do it somehow." With that, she stormed out, slamming the door behind her.

Carrie was staring around in shock. "What did I just do? What will I do?"

Nancy put a hand on his shoulder. "We can worry about that later. But for now, you just confirmed something I was starting to suspect: your powers only work when you're feeling emotional about something. It was like that in the bathroom, and with Tommy, and just now. And whatever that means, there's some more people you should meet."

It had no name of its own. There was no need of one. It did not ask to be known, or worshipped, or anything else that would require a

name. All it wanted was life. The children it had fought called it the Mind Flayer, which fit as well as anything else.

It was not often roused to anger, as so often the worlds it conquered fell with barely a fight. What else could serve as proof that it deserved to destroy as many worlds as it had? But its defeat at the hands of these people raised up the nearly forgotten emotion again. It had only suffered such a loss once before, at the hands of a group of its former victims. It had learned a lesson from that loss, to stop bothering with disguises like a dancing clown. Just get the business done. And it had worked, until now.

After being locked back into this dead world it had already destroyed, it could have simply gone on to another. But it simply could not let go of its need for revenge. It had looked ceaselessly for a way back in, with no need to eat or sleep to distract it. And now, it may have just found one. The new arrival had abilities similar to the girl who had shoved it out of her world, but they didn't come from the same source. And that very difference in their nature could be the key to its return.

That song they had used to celebrate their victory was a subject of dark amusement. A soft, keening ballad whose tone disguised its content of an obsessive lust that demanded fulfillment by any means possible. And now, the Mind Flayer would make it come true.

## 4. Chapter 4

After school the next day, Nancy took Carrie with her to Hawkins Middle School. They met Mike coming out the front door, with the entire gang trailing after him. He smiled at Carrie and said, "This is the whole party, that's what we call ourselves. This is Will, Dustin," (he shot Dustin a warning not to show off his teeth) "Lucas, Max, and the one we really wanted you to meet, Jane."

They all shook Carrie's hand as they were introduced, but the girl with slicked-back hair and smoky eyes threw her for a loop by offering her left hand instead. And when Carrie stuck out her own, Jane very clearly turned her head to stare at Carrie's arm. "No tattoo," she said.

Nancy put a hand to her face, embarrassed. "Jane's still learning about certain social skills, you'll have to excuse her."

Carrie shrugged. "I don't mind. But what does she mean about a tattoo?"

Jane turned her own arm to show the "011" she was stuck with for life, unwilling to go through any more procedures even to have it removed. "I got it from the same place that made me able to do this." She slipped off her backpack, and with a quick dip of her head it was floating in midair.

The rest of the group quickly rounded on her, shouting for her not to do it out in the open. Carrie would have found it funny, except the act itself was still stuck in her mind. She had just barely discovered her own powers, and suddenly here was someone else who could do it too?

Jane put the backpack back on and turned back to Carrie. "So what can you do?"

Carrie blushed. "I can't just do it when I want to. I have to be really upset, or something."

The other girl smiled. "I used to be like that too. Maybe I can help

you get better at it. But, where did it come from?"

Carrie looked back at Wendy. "It just started a few days ago. I don't know anything else about it, just that Mama said it was evil."

Jane scoffed and said, "Right, the mouth breather."

Everyone paused for a few shocked seconds. But then Carrie started to shake, and a few titters escaped, and suddenly she was laughing out loud until it started to draw attention from the few people still around. The party quickly moved her down the sidewalk, until they seemed far enough away to avoid any more attention. That's when Max spoke up: "So this is getting to be a regular thing with you guys, huh? Should I expect another new girl next year?"

Carrie didn't know what to make of this at first, but the others were all so clearly amused that she quickly got on board with it. Mike then spoke up again: "Well, whatever happens, it sure can't hurt to have another badass psychic in the group, right?"

"Exactly what I was thinking."

Everyone spun to face the new arrival, to which it was Dustin who first started talking again. "Mr. Clarke, we were just talking about a new game..."

The teacher held his hand up. "I'll just stop you right there. You really thought you were being subtle with all that stuff you were asking about other dimensions and how to cross over? And don't think I just forgot about whatever it was in that box you were all so afraid to show me." Now having gotten their full attention, he continued, "Yeah, I've been keeping an eye on you for a while now, and I don't quite understand everything that's been going on, but I've gotten enough to know how big a deal it is. And with our new arrival here, I think it's about time I just offered my help."

Carrie shyly looked away, and Mr. Clarke's voice softened. "Oh, don't worry, dear. I'm sure you're just caught up in this like the rest of them. But if what I suspect is true, you'll have a part to play in this, and you should be prepared for it as much as possible."

Nancy stepped forward. "Excuse me, but as far as I know you're just a middle school teacher. And we've been doing pretty well on our own. So just what are you offering here?"

Mr. Clarke smiled. "That's exactly the kind of question you should be asking. And the answer takes a bit of explanation. The short version is, when I was around your age I had my own experience with, well, monsters."

Everyone suddenly stiffened at that, and he went on unfazed, clearly having expected it. "I lived through it, but a lot of people didn't, and I did everything I could to leave it behind. I moved here, and changed my name, and just tried to live as normal a life as I could. Unfortunately, that's not an option anymore." He took a deep breath, before divulging the information he hoped he'd never have to give again.

"My name is Mark Petrie."

## 5. Chapter 5

In the AV Club room, Mr. Clarke, or Mark Petrie, finished his story.

Lucas was the first to respond, and it was pretty much like Mark has expected, an incredulous "Vampires."

He shrugged. "I know. Even with all the stuff happening in this town, it's hard to believe. Ever since it happened, I've occasionally wondered if the whole thing was real. But then there's the news reports about people who have been disappearing in Salem's Lot ever since. We killed Barlow, but he still got what he wanted in the end."

Mike said, "I guess we have no choice but to believe it. So, you think it's connected to the Upside Down?" They had shared their full story first.

Mark nodded. "We suspected that Barlow was working for some greater evil, though we never found out what it was. But with all this stuff about the Mind Flayer, I think I can make a pretty good guess."

Dustin snapped his fingers. "It was putting on a show! It knew no one would believe a story like old timey vampires, so that's what it showed you."

Mark sighed. "It makes a lot of sense. This thing definitely isn't just some monster. It was smart enough to set up that whole invasion last year. And I don't feel comfortable assuming it's gone for good."

Jane shook her head. "I would have felt it die. It's still there, in the Upside Down."

Dustin shivered. "Maybe it's watching us right now."

Carrie let out a low moan. "Maybe I should have just stayed with Mama. Then I wouldn't have to worry about any of this."

Nancy gently put a hand on her shoulder. "You can't think like that. That woman was abusive. She's bad for you."

A tear welled up as Carrie replied "But I would feel safe. I don't know

what to do with any of this."

The rest of the team gathered around her. "You have all of us," Mike said. He gestured to Mark. "And that includes you too."

Mark was a bit uneasy as he made his way over to this group of kids no older than he'd been while fighting those vampires. No one that age should have to go through something like that. But he was comforted that they had more people to lean on than he'd had for his fight. If anything was going to see them all through this, it was that bond.

Margaret White knelt before her beloved Crucifix, which had been in her family for untold generations and had always brought her comfort even in her darkest moments.

"I know you have a plan," she said. "I am being tested. And I swear, I will prevail. I have never faced a challenge like this before, my own daughter turned against me, and so many villains to defeat to get her back. I don't know how, but I will fulfill what you want of me and emerge victorious. It has all been ordained from the start."

She said the words, but deep down inside, where she was afraid to look herself, there was a kernel of doubt growing. All those determined eyes staring at her, judging her, had been an unnerving sight, and to see her own Carrie take up with such people was almost more than her heart would take. Even her religion was struggling to bring her true peace in the face of such adversity.

The knock at the door made her gasp out loud. She counted herself very fortunate that her prayer had just ended, as to interrupt it with such a sound would be a horrible blasphemy. She crossed herself and stood, trying not to rush and retain her dignity as she answered the knock.

The man who stood there was a stranger. She noticed his long blonde hair with some distaste, but quickly recovered and said "Can I help you?"

"I certainly hope so. I've just arrived in town, and I was driven to go to this house. I'm afraid this will sound very strange, but I felt



something pulling me, like some higher power."

It almost seemed too good to be true, but then Margaret's faith had always been rewarded before. "Not many these days would believe you, I'm sorry to say, but I absolutely do. Would you come in?"

"Yes, thank you." He entered the house, but still seemed awkward as he just stood in front of her. "You're Margaret White, aren't you? I talked to some of your neighbors before I came."

Margaret huffed. "I'm sure they had some juicy gossip for you."

The man nodded sadly. "And it sounds like you could use a friend with everything going on. I was horrified to hear about what those people did, tearing your daughter away from you. I want to help."

Margaret smiled, an expression becoming increasingly rare for her. "Well, I'll certainly accept. Oh, what's your name?"

He looked embarrassed. "I'm so sorry, this is all so weird that I forgot my manners. I'm Todd Bowden."

The Mind Flayer was more satisfied than it had been for some time. It had been a while since it had needed to so directly influence a person's mind like this, but Todd Bowden made for an ideal assistant. The fool had willingly opened his mind to darkness in his formative years, making the manipulation of his thoughts insultingly easy. And now that it had a way in, it was only a matter of time before it could take revenge.

## 6. Chapter 6

The knocking at the door startled everyone. Not only were the Wheelers just sitting down to dinner, but they sounded especially loud and urgent. Nancy was the first to stand up and answer, and was shocked further to find Margaret White at the door, with a disconcerting grin on her face.

"I'll be taking my daughter back now," she said.

Nancy's parents had followed her and now stood beside her. Her mother promptly replied, "Did you forget how this ended last time?"

At the shock of seeing Margaret, none of them noticed the man behind her until he spoke. "That's what I'm here for. I'm Todd Bowden, and I guess you could call me Mrs. White's legal council."

Todd grinned to himself at the stretch of the truth which wasn't nearly the biggest such he'd done in his life. After bluffing that he could accuse his guidance counselor of molesting him, this was nothing. In fact, he'd gotten his own legal help in this case through more blackmail, of a man the same mysterious force that brought him here had led him to. Billy Halleck might be disgustingly fat, but he was a great lawyer, and even against his will had come up with some quite good strategies.

He held up an intimidating amount of papers. "Everything's right here. There's no question that Mrs. White has the legal right to her child. If you persist in keeping them away, I'll be more than happy to call the police right now."

Nancy scoffed, and turned to her parents. "Well, Carrie's not going anywhere, right?" But she was met by downturned expressions from them both.

Ted was surprisingly the first to speak. "Honey, we were on your side about this from the start. But if he's right about the legality of it... Karen, what do you think?"

After rolling her eyes at once again getting the buck passed to her,

Karen nodded. "We'll have to look all this over, but we can't continue with this if it's against the law."

Nancy stared at them wide-eyed. "But it's the right thing to do! You know it is!"

Todd chuckled. "Little girl, you have no idea how the world works, do you? The law is on our side here, and that's all that matters." He held the papers out to her. "Feel free to look through them, but we'll be expecting Carrie down here and ready to go within an hour."

Nancy snatched them away. "Well, she's not here anyway. And I'm going to make damn sure you're right about this before I tell you where she is."

Jane was struggling mightily to keep her temper. "You are focusing like I told you, right?"

Carrie seemed just as exasperated. "Just like all the other times you asked, yes! It's just not working."

Hopper offered from the kitchen, "Maybe you could be getting mad enough right now to do it anyway, you ever think of that?"

Jane shook her head. "I've got this." She stopped before the final word "Dad," which she still wasn't quite comfortable saying out loud no matter how much she wanted to.

A loud knock came at the door, but the three barely even had time to turn to it before Carrie's mother came barging through, looking furious. Todd entered behind her. "I've already done this once tonight, so the short version: Carrie, your mother is legally your guardian and if you don't come with her right now, all these people you like so much are going to be in big trouble with the law."

Hopper stepped forward. "Well, it happens I'm part of the law, so you want to run that by me again?"

Todd shrugged. "Unfortunately, there's other people currently looking over the full argument I came up with, but trust me, it'll hold up in court, and if you really respect your job, you'll be on our side here."

Hopper turned to Carrie to assure her he would do no such thing, but was brought up short by the look on her face. It was such a deep well of anger that he found himself helpless to protest as she said, "I should have known it couldn't last. Everyone being so nice to me, when all I've heard my whole life is that I can't be loved." She turned to Margaret and Todd. "But I'm not going back. And you can't make me." They were both suddenly thrown off their feet and slammed hard into the wall, where they remained pinned by Carrie's attack. Holding up an arm to keep them there, she turned to Hopper. "And you're not going to do anything either."

"NO!" Jane shouted, and as soon as Carrie started her attack, she blocked it with one of her own. Margaret and Todd slumped to the floor as Carrie focused all her attention on her one equal in this fight.

And high above, the energy from two such powerful psychic assaults opened a tear in the sky itself, and the Shadow Monster looked through.